



California Center for Regional Leadership

February 10, 2005

To: Regional Representatives

SAMPLE

Over the years, many of our Regional Collaborative and other partners across the state have spent considerable time and energy helping to foster improved local and regional decision-making around housing and commercial/industrial development and conservation of open space and natural lands. In doing so, they have become all-too-familiar with the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA, which was intended when passed in 1970 to be one of our most significant tools in guiding development while preserving environmental quality. As an element of its overall initiative to support better planning and investment in development and conservation, Governor Schwarzenegger has asked the Resources Secretary, Mike Chrisman, together with a Cabinet working group and stakeholders from many sectors and from around the state to undertake a thorough review of the law to determine how it can be improved to meet our current needs for development while enhancing environmental quality. Secretary Chrisman has asked CCRL to assist in this project, through facilitation of the state-level CEQA Improvement Advisory Group and through organizing regional outreach sessions, together with our civic and business partners around the state. The Public Policy Institute of California and USC's Keston Infrastructure Institute will provide research support to the effort.

We are writing to invite you now to ask if you would be interested in cosponsoring a regional CEQA Improvement Dialogue to help shape the understanding of this issue from the perspective of your region and your range of local "stakeholders." Secretary Chrisman has asked that we organize such dialogues in six regions (the Bay Area, Sacramento, Central Valley, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego) in March and April of this year. These need not be stand alone events, if you have a committee which normally examines growth and development issues and will be meeting during this time. If the committee is not fully representative of the stakeholders who should be part of such a conversation, we would ask that you invite others to join in the conversation for this one meeting only. For our part, we would bring leaders from the Administration, the Advisory Group and our research partners, and we will facilitate the meeting and following the meeting prepare a digest of the key ideas and insights that emerge. It would be our intention to come back for a second meeting in the fall to lay out some policy options that have been presented to the Advisory Group, in order to get the best possible thinking of the regions before Secretary Chrisman and the Cabinet Working Group make their recommendations to the Governor.

The tentative agenda for the Regional Dialogues is as follows:

- I. CEQA Improvement Project purpose and process—overview. Role of Advisory Group.
- II. Regional Dialogue Overview
 - a. (Number and mix of people, type of venue, intended outcomes)
 - b. Questions to be considered in advance and at the event by attendees (written comments will be solicited in advance, for those who wish to provide them, not to exceed 2 pages)
 - i) What are your region's critical conservation and development issues, and what role does CEQA play in advancing or impeding those conservation and development needs?
 - ii) What specific planning efforts or significant projects have benefited from CEQA in its current form or have been diminished because of CEQA? How?
 - iii) Because it will be important to find areas of convergent opinion among a variety of stakeholders if legislation is to move forward, what examples of such convergence, around local or regional policy or planning decisions or specific

conservation of development projects, might be seen as ground or precursor for improving the CEQA statute?

- iv) What other observations or ideas would you like to share with the Secretary and the Advisory Group?

We realize that this is a short time frame and would like to get started right away by speaking with you in more detail about the requirements and logistics of co-sponsoring a CEQA Improvement Dialogue in your region.

We look forward to hearing from you and working on this important new project over the next few months.

Best regards,

Nick and Seth